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ABSTRACT

A voluntary quinmester plan for extending the school year was tried in five Knox County Tennessee schools. Ten University of Tennesse faculty members teamed to evaluate the program's K-12 curriculum revision, administration, public opinion, costs, student and staff morale, and student achievement. Achievement was not significantly influenced, but three-fourths of every group affected liked year-round operation. Nevertheless, only 12 percent of the eligible students attended the summer quinmester, so the school board eliminated the program after its second year. The evaluation team concluded that the future of year-round education depends on selling summer attendance to the community and demonstrating student achievement gains. (Author)

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EVALUATION OF THE KNOX COUNTY (TENNESSEE) EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM: A TEAM EFFORT

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of the Knox County (Tennessee) Extended School Year Program: A Team Effort (EVA)

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A voluntary quinmester plan for extending the school year was tried in five Knox County (Tennessee) schools. Ten University of Tennessee faculty members teamed to evaluate the program's K-12 curriculum revision, administration, public opinion, costs, student and staff morale, and student achievement. Achievement was not significantly influenced, but three-fourths of every group affected liked year-round operation. Nevertheless, only 12 percent of the eligible students attended the Summer Quinmester, thus the school board eliminated the third year of the program. The future of year-round education depends on selling summer attendance to the community and demonstrating student achievement gains.

EVALUATION OF THE KNOX COUNTY (TENNESSEE) EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM: A TEAM EFFORT

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Introduction

In June 1974 a three-year trial of a voluntary quinmester plan for extending the school year was begun in two primary and two middle schools and one high school in Knox County (Tennessee). The ESY project was partially funded by an E.S.E.A. Title III project grant. The primary objective of the extended school year in Knox County was curriculum improvement. Secondary goals included relief from overcrowding and more efficient utilization of professional staff and physical facilities.

Extensive curriculum revision in grades K-12 made it theoretically possible for students in the five schools to attend the summer quinmester, then vacation during any other nine-week period without missing anything their classmates had studied. Administrators of the Knox County system hoped that at least 25 percent of the students at the participating schools would be interested in going to school in the summer and vacationing sometime between September and June, thus alleviating overcrowding in an attendance zone which had been experiencing a 15 percent annual growth rate in its student population for a decade.

Lack of interest in the two summer quins which Knox County operated caused the system to verify by its own experience what many other school systems experimenting with year-round education have found, i.e., no voluntary staggered attendance plan, such as the quinmester pattern, will result in significant

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reductions in enrollment during the "regular" school year because too few students elect the summer session.

Summer as the time for vacation from school proved to be too important a tradition to permit more than 13 percent of the students enrolled at the five schools to volunteer for one of the two summer quinmesters. The planned three-year ESY project was cut short after two years because school board members did not feel the extra expenditures associated with the summer quinmester were justified for such a small proportion of the students.

In 1971 and 1972 a feasibility study was conducted by system administrators with the cooperation of numerous professional and community representatives, including parents, students and members of the news media. During 1973 the project proposal was developed by Knox County administrative staff. The evaluators did not participate in either of these processes, and the plan for evaluation was outlined only in a very general way in the proposal. The proposal contained the suggestions that the evaluation provide:

1) formative evaluation of planning processes in these areas:

   curriculum content
   student scheduling
   facility and staff scheduling
   staff orientation and development
   public relations
   financial accounting and instructional supplies control
   facility maintenance
   student orientation
   administrative organization

2) summative evaluation in each of these general areas:

   program planning
   cost effectiveness
   educational soundness
   public acceptance
   relative applicability at all grade levels, K-12.

Specifying the Project Objectives

Interaction between the evaluation director and administrative staff of the ESY project during the early months of operation provided the evaluator

with an understanding of the project which permitted her to formulate a set of specific objectives stated in such a way that the achievement of each could be measured using accessible data. This new statement of objectives was submitted to members of the ESY Administrative Committee in November 1974 and was subsequently endorsed by that group. The objectives then provided guidance for the program evaluation.

A review of literature in the area of year-round education suggested a number of measures of program effectiveness. Many of these, along with other measures suggested by the evaluation director and ESY administrative staff, were incorporated, as appropriate, to assess the achievement of the stated project objectives. The evaluation design which resulted from the attempt to provide formative and summative data on these project objectives was lengthy and, in some instances, complex. However, the ESY project involved a major scheduling change and total curriculum reorganization K-12: teachers and supervisors wrote new goals and objectives, then developed five non-sequential 9-week resource modules at each grade level. Obviously the program itself was extensive and complex, and could only be properly evaluated utilizing multiple data sources. The complexity was reduced to manageable proportions, however, by the written statement of project objectives. Continuous availability of the objectives put the evaluative activities into perspective, helped pull the disparate pieces of information gathered into a coherent whole, and provided the organizational framework for the final evaluation report.

The objectives to be achieved by the end of the three-year trial period originally specified for the ESY project were:

1) To provide a new curriculum which represents an improvement over that employed heretofore in the ESY schools in these areas:

   a) Student morale and motivation as evidenced by

--- increased attendance

--- lower dropout rate

--- reduction in incidence of disciplinary referrals to principals

--- reduction in vandalism, i.e., willful destruction of school property

--- increased circulation of library books

--- increased circulation of other instructional materials (particularly those available in the classroom)

--- attitude toward school (as measured by a standardized instrument designed for this purpose)

--- expression of the perception by at least a majority of the students that instruction is being individualized.

b) Professional staff satisfaction as evidenced by

--- positive responses on the part of at least a majority of the staff to at least half of the queries about the new curriculum which may be included in questionnaires or interviews administered as part of the internal or external evaluation process

--- expression of satisfaction on the part of at least a majority of the staff that more curriculum materials have been made available through the ESY Program

--- expression of the perception by at least a majority of the staff that the new curriculum materials facilitate individualization of instruction

--- no appreciable increase in staff turnover.

c) Student achievement as evidenced by

--- higher (or at least not substantially lower) group scores on standardized achievement tests

--- reduction in the proportion of failing grades given at Farragut High School

--- higher group scores on tests designed to measure aptitude for college work (e.g., ACT or SAT)

--- increased parental approval of the effects of the curriculum on their children.

2) To provide an instructional program which is perceived by at least a majority of the administrators as easier to evaluate than the previous program.

3) To provide student scheduling which will facilitate operation of ESY and not penalize the student who attends school during the summer quinmester.

4) To provide an organizational structure which at least a majority of the professional staff perceives as supportive of ESY and the new curriculum

   a) To explore role perceptions of administrators, supervisors, and teachers

   b) To assess staff satisfaction

   c) To explore communication and decision-making processes

   d) To satisfy the perceived need for psychological and technical support for professional staff

   e) To satisfy the perceived need for curriculum materials

   f) To satisfy the perceived need for physical facilities essential to the program.

5) To provide professional staff with a continuing program of orientation and professional development which is perceived by at least a majority of the staff as adequate to meet their informational needs.

6) To provide more efficient use than at present of school facilities and professional personnel

   a) to provide some relief from over-crowded facilities by reducing by at least ten percent the anticipated pupil enrollment during each of the four "regular school year" quinmesters (September through May)

   b) to provide, over a period of years, sufficient reduction in capital outlay to offset the increased operational costs of the ESY Program.

7) To produce an expression of a favorable attitude toward ESY on the part of at least a majority of those persons concerned about schools in the Farragut High School attendance zone through an appropriate information program

   a) to produce an expression of a favorable attitude toward ESY on the part of at least a majority of the voting population in the Farragut High School attendance zone

   b) to produce an expression of a favorable attitude toward ESY on the part of at least a majority of the students attending the five ESY schools

   c) to produce an expression of a favorable attitude toward ESY on the part of at least a majority of the parents of the students attending the five ESY schools

   d) to produce an expression of a favorable attitude toward ESY on the part of at least a majority of the professional staff associated with the five ESY schools.

8) To document the feasibility of a five-term, optional attendance, extended school year program in a suburban Tennessee school system

   a) to show that using a voluntary attendance plan, a summer quinmester enrollment of at least twenty-five percent of the anticipated total school enrollment for the coming year can be attained

b) to demonstrate that a quality educational program (with sufficient materials, equipment, and facilities) can be provided at a cost which the community is willing to bear

c) to determine the advantages and/or disadvantages of an extended school year program at the primary level, at the middle school level, and at the high school level.

The foregoing objectives suggest four major areas for evaluative activities:

1) Curriculum improvement and student scheduling to accommodate curriculum changes

2) Organizational structure and professional development

3) Facility usage and cost effectiveness

4) Acceptance by Knox County voters and personnel associated with ESY schools.

Four teams of University of Tennessee College of Education staff members, each with expertise in one of these four areas, were formed to conduct the ESY evaluation. Curriculum improvement objectives were treated primarily by a team composed of Dr. Robert Howard, Dr. Lester N. Knight, and Dr. John R. Ray of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. John T. Lovell of the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision (EA&S) met with the Curriculum Committee to discuss areas of common interest, but conducted a separate evaluation of the ESY organizational structure and program of professional development.

Facility usage and cost effectiveness were studied by Dr. Kenneth O'Fallon of the Bureau of Educational Research and Service (BERS) and Dr. George W. Harris of EA&S. A voter opinion survey in selected areas of Knox County was supervised by Dr. Larry Hughes of EA&S and conducted by his graduate student Mr. Jerry Kondwros.

Overall coordination of the ESY evaluation, including the design of a major portion of the data-gathering instruments and processes, was the responsibility of Dr. Trudy W. Banta of the BERS. If any member of the evaluation team needed

information from the ESY project staff, that need was made known to the evaluation director, who then contacted the appropriate project staff. If needed, subsequent contacts were then arranged between the evaluation team member requesting information from project staff. This procedure facilitated coordination of the evaluation by keeping the director informed of all issues, problems, and interaction with project staff which were connected with the operation of each element of the evaluation.

In addition to the objectives for curriculum improvement previously identified, the Curriculum Committee established its own set of evaluation objectives during the second year of the project. The objectives were:

1. To ascertain the extent to which
   a) teachers were familiar with the content of Knox County Schools Instructional Goals and Objectives.
   b) teachers and administrators approved of the content of this document after a year of use.

2. To describe and assess the procedures used to determine
   a) the scope of the individual curriculum modules.
   b) the sequence of concepts or topics presented in each module.

3. To describe and assess the procedures used to determine the content (i.e., the development of the concepts or topics presented) of curriculum modules. (What resources were used? How was time allocated among concepts? How were learning activities chosen? How were the procedures for evaluation of pupil progress determined?)

4. To identify the components of the curriculum modules which teachers and administrators perceived as a) facilitators and/or b) constraints in implementing curriculum modules in the classroom.

5. To describe and assess the extent to which curriculum content was adapted to accommodate the varying learning styles of individual students.

6. To describe and assess the extent to which curriculum content was adapted to accommodate the varying academic achievement levels of individual students.

7. To determine the extent to which curriculum module development proceeded toward completion during the first two years of program operation.

8. To determine the extent to which curriculum modules were used by ESY teachers.

9. To describe and assess the system used by ESY administrators and supervisors to evaluate (i.e., internal evaluation) and revise the curriculum modules.

Members of the evaluation team made an assumption at the outset that since no suitable control schools were available for comparison with ESY schools, the most acceptable data for comparative purposes over the three-year ESY trial period would be that accumulated for the five ESY schools during the three years prior to ESY (i.e., 1971-72, 1972-73, 1973-74). Glass, Willson and Gottman (1975) have pointed out that it is difficult to identify trends in time series data with any confidence when fewer than 50 time points are available (p. 112). In several instances the ESY data did not yield measurements for more than six time points. Thus any conclusions based on these data are, of necessity, quite tentative. Nevertheless, in the absence of a control group, the quasi-experimental interrupted time-series design offered the best model for the ESY evaluation.

Evaluation Methodology and Findings

Student Morale and Motivation

Indications of the effect of the ESY curriculum changes on student morale and motivation at the five project schools were obtained from school records and from questionnaires administered to samples of students at each level: primary, middle, and secondary. When school records were used, figures from the two years of ESY operation were compared with those for the three years prior to ESY, i.e., 1971-72, 1972-73, and 1973-74. While none of the indicators, as discussed below, revealed a dramatic positive change that could be directly attributed to the ESY materials, no indicator showed a significant negative change, either. Indeed, the number of high school dropouts declined during the ESY years, vandalism and behavior problems were virtually nonexistent during the two summer quinmesters, student attitude toward school was quite positive,

and primary and middle school students perceived an improvement between the first and second years of ESY in the extent to which instruction was being individualized. Directions discernible in the data supported an overall conclusion that the ESY curriculum certainly had not had a negative influence on student morale or motivation, and in some cases the effect appeared to be a positive one. Key findings associated with each indicator are summarized below.

·Attendance was not significantly affected by the introduction of ESY. During the two ESY years annual average daily attendance at the five schools decreased in as many instances -- five -- as it increased. When average daily attendance for each of the summer quinmesters was compared with ADA for the subsequent September-June school year, no significant differences were found.

·At the primary and middle schools the dropout rate remained relatively stable and quite low during the five years studied, i.e., the three years prior to ESY and the two years of program operation. At the high school the number of dropouts had decreased significantly by the end of the second ESY year. The numbers of students leaving school due to employment, marriage, and misbehavior declined between 1971-72 and 1975-76.

·ESY principals reported that student-faculty morale was at a high point during the summer quinmesters, and vandalism and other discipline-related problems were virtually eliminated from the concerns of principals. However, the principals did not see an appreciable difference during the September-June school years in the number or seriousness of (1) disciplinary referrals to principals or (2) incidents of vandalism.

·Librarians at the ESY schools generally agreed that the ESY curriculum changes increased the use of library references by students. However, total circulation declined at three schools during the second year of the program, giving rise to the speculation that reading for pleasure may have declined.

·Teachers did not feel that student usage of instructional materials other than library books -- specifically those available in classrooms -- increased significantly with the introduction of the ESY curriculum modules.

·Since no comparable measure of student attitude toward school prior to 1974-75 was available, there was no way to determine whether the ESY curriculum changes produced an improvement or a decline in student attitudes. However, administration in March 1975 of the appropriate form of the "School Sentiment Index" at each level (primary, intermediate, and secondary) provided evidence that majorities of students at all schools held favorable attitudes toward the aspects of school measured by the instrument. In March 1976 a second sample of student opinion at all levels was drawn, and comparison of the 1976 responses with 1975 responses to such questions as "Do you like school more this year than last year?" and "Do you like the new lessons and learning activities...?" indicates that student attitudes improved during the second year of ESY.

Without exception the students exhibiting the most favorable attitudes at each school were those who had attended the summer quinmester. This fact combined with the other findings makes it reasonable to conclude that institutionalization of the ESY schedule and curriculum changes during the second year resulted in student attitudes which were (1) improved somewhat from the first year of ESY operation, and (2) quite positive.

·Individualization of instruction was one of the principal goals of the curriculum revisions associated with ESY. Perhaps due in large part to the inflated pupil-teacher ratios at the crowded ESY schools, the goal of individualizing instruction for at least a majority of the ESY students was not achieved during the first operational year. Though the ESY schedule provided no significant relief from overcrowding during the second year, student perceptions of the extent of individualization taking place did improve.

More than half of the primary and middle school students sampled in March 1976 gave favorable responses to six of eight questionnaire items concerning

individualization. Thus the 'majority positive' criterion set for individualization appeared to have been met at primary and middle schools.

Significant improvement in perceptions of individualization took place among the high school sophomores between March 1975 and March 1976, but the 'majority positive' criterion was not reached. Only 27 percent of the tenth graders perceived that they were 'allowed to skip over things' they already knew and work at their own rates of speed, and just 33 percent said their study materials were 'not the same as those' other students were using. Only 3 percent answered positively the question "In most subjects do you and the teacher plan the work just for you?"

Professional Staff Satisfaction with Curriculum

Interviews with a sample of teachers at each ESY school during the second operational year revealed that most teachers:

·approved of the contents of the document Instructional Goals and Objectives which had been written by Knox County teachers and supervisors to guide the development of ESY curriculum modules. Teachers apparently appreciated having some knowledge of system-wide expectations regarding subject area content and student performance.

·appreciated having the opportunity to write and to revise the curriculum modules.

·used the modules as resource units rather than as series of daily lesson plans.

·approved generally of module content, viewing performance objectives and suggested learning activities as the most helpful components, and evaluation of pupil performance as the least helpful.

Staff turnover statistics for the school years 1971-72 through 1975-76 did not indicate any dissatisfaction with ESY on the part of teachers or

administrators at the five project schools. Despite substantial increases in administrative workloads which accompanied extending the school year, no principal or assistant principal resigned or requested a transfer from an ESY school during the two operational years of the program. Due in part to a tightening labor market, the number of teachers leaving the system or transferring from ESY schools to other schools in Knox County declined steadily from 1972 through 1976. No upsurge in resignations or requests for transfer occurred when the ESY curriculum changes were instituted. An additional indication of teacher acceptance of ESY was the fact that the two summer quinmesters were staffed almost exclusively with volunteers who were willing to forego their usual summer breaks and work year-round.

Student Achievement

Metropolitan Achievement Test scores for grades 3, 5, and 8 at the ESY primary and middle schools were compared for the years pre- and post-ESY. Reading achievement showed a small, non-significant, increase following the initiation of the ESY project. Mathematics achievement declined very slightly; and instituting the ESY curriculum did not interrupt the gradual, but unmistakable, decline in science and social studies achievement which occurred between 1971 and 1975.

During a period when national test score averages were experiencing a general decline, the high school students held or increased the school's percentile rank on the various subscales of the ACT. Between 1972 and 1976 the group of juniors and seniors taking the ACT in the spring changed little in grade point average, but posted significant gains in English and social studies as measured by the ACT. The percentile scores on the ACT Composite and Math and Natural Science subtests were relatively stable during the same period.

The quantity and quality of the available achievement data severely limit conclusions about the effects of ESY curriculum changes on achievement. Nevertheless it can be said that the changes did not exert a significant negative influence on achievement as measured by the Metropolitan in grades 3, 5, and 8; and at the high school the new English and social studies curriculum material may have been particularly effective in promoting student achievement.

Parental Approval of Curriculum Effects

In November 1974 almost two-thirds of a sample of registered voters in the area of West Knox County served by the ESY schools agreed with the statement, "The Knox County Schools are providing students with the kind of educational experience that they need." But when a sample of ESY parents was questioned in March 1975 it was evident that parental approval of the new ESY curriculum was somewhat less enthusiastic.

When a second sample of third, sixth, and tenth grade parents was surveyed in March 1976, the respondents seemed to have adopted a more positive attitude toward the ESY curriculum than was apparent the previous year. Half of the parents believed their child liked school 'more this year than last year', and half of the third and sixth grade parents believed the new curriculum was 'effective' in helping their child 'learn basic skills: reading, writing, arithmetic.'

Administration of ESY

The curriculum changes associated with ESY increased standardization of expectations with regard to what teachers would teach and what students would learn. The five ESY principals believed the changes were making it easier for them to evaluate the instructional program in their schools. The County's new goals and objectives and the more specific objectives in the curriculum modules

gave ESY principals 1) guidance concerning activities being carried out in individual subject areas throughout the year, and 2) criteria against which to measure student achievement in each subject.

Scheduling of classes at the high school posed problems for many ESY students. In a questionnaire administered to all sophomores in March 1976 just thirty-one percent of the respondents said the high school offered all the courses they wanted to take, and 63 percent said they had been able to schedule all the courses they needed from the list that was available. Half of the sophomores who had attended the 1975 Summer Quin reported that they had had 'problems with their classes' as a result of summer attendance, and scheduling was the problem identified most often.

Administrative Structure and Professional Development

Knox County administrators and supervisors involved in ESY reported that the new program had created many new responsibilities for them. During the first operational year these changes interfered with their other responsibilities, and since they had no additional assistance they had to spend more time at work. By the second operational year, however, ways had been found to integrate ESY-related responsibilities into existing work assignments so that both could be performed without a substantial increase in work time.

ESY administrators and supervisors derived satisfaction from involvement in the ESY program; they believed ESY had improved the school system, and that it should have been continued to its pre-planned conclusion.

Development of the new curriculum materials constituted a substantial part of the professional development program for instructional leadership personnel. Supervisors, principals, and teachers worked together on strategies for implementing the materials, and on evaluation and revision of the materials.

Cost Analysis

Compared to the three-year average prior to the inception of the ESY project, direct costs per student contact hour, adjusted for inflation, increased an average of seven percent at the five participating schools during the ESY years. Cost increases were highest (30 percent) at the high school, and lowest (6 percent and (-7) percent) at the two primary schools. Sub-categories of direct costs which showed the largest increases were salaries; heat, light and power; custodial services and supplies; and maintenance of buildings. Increases in maintenance costs were associated chiefly with installation and maintenance of air-conditioning systems in buildings which were not previously air-conditioned.

Attitudes Toward Year-Round Programming

Voters in the Farragut area expressed favorable attitudes toward ESY when sampled in November 1974. Eighty percent of registered voters responding to a poll conducted by mail believed that ESY could "improve education in Knox County" and that the program "should be offered to other parts of the county." Eighty-eight percent liked the idea of providing families with alternatives to the summer vacation period for their children. Ninety-five percent of the voters responding agreed that "While the Extended School Year may not reduce educational costs, it can provide for greater use of school buildings and relieve overcrowded schools."

Students in the ESY schools were, in general, favorably impressed with their educational opportunities under the new program. When student opinion was sampled in March 1975, 87 percent of the high school respondents, 70 percent of the middle school respondents, and two-thirds of the primary respondents liked having the chance to go to school during the summer if they wanted to do so.

Two-thirds of the primary level respondents said they were more interested in school than before ESY began; 39 percent of the middle school sample, and 33 percent of the secondary sample expressed a similar opinion.

At all levels students who attended the Summer Quin expressed more favorable attitudes toward ESY than did those who were enrolled only during the traditional school year.

By the end of March 1976, when another sample of student opinion was drawn at third, sixth, and tenth grade levels, the Knox County school board had accepted the superintendent's recommendation to terminate the ESY program, and the effect of this decision was apparent in student responses. Just 57 percent of all respondents said they felt the schools should be open year-round. The percentage of 1975 Summer Quin students responding positively to this item fell from 85 when it was asked in the summer to 70 in March. Sophomores expressed the highest level of commitment to year-round education: 72 percent said the schools should operate year-round, while only half of the third and sixth grade samples responded similarly.

Apparently students and teachers were more comfortable with ESY as it became institutionalized. Seventy-one percent of the third graders, 75 percent of the sixth graders, and 57 percent of the sophomores said they liked school 'more this year than last year.' When asked if they liked 'the new lessons and learning activities that the teachers had been using since ESY began, 85 percent of the third graders, 77 percent of the sixth graders, and 67 percent of the sophomores said 'yes'.

More than three-fourths of parents responding to a questionnaire in March 1975 favored "the ESY plan for using Knox County Schools on a 12-month basis." Only one-quarter would support a mandatory attendance plan, however. In order of preference, parents' reasons for approving of ESY included: having the

opportunity to choose the time of year when one's children could be out of school; smaller classes during the Summer Quin, and the promise of smaller classes during the regular school year; year-round utilization of school facilities and personnel; and curriculum improvement.

Both student and parent enthusiasm for extending the school year was lessened by the administrative decisions which cut short the ESY trial. Use of the schools on a 12-month basis was favored by only 43 percent of third, sixth, and tenth grade parent respondents when they were surveyed in March 1976.

When asked why so few students had chosen to attend the two summer quinmesters, the responses of parents and students at all levels were remarkably similar. The reasons ranked first and second by all groups were:

(1) "Summer is the time for vacation from school; it's hard to change that habit and think of coming to school in the summer," and

(2) "Students miss too many summer activities (camp, swimming and other sports, family trips) if they attend school during the summer."

Interviews with principals and teachers at the ESY schools during the second year of the program strengthened the conclusion, based on data obtained the previous year, that professional staff generally approved of the ESY scheduling and curriculum, and were disappointed that the program would not be continued.

The responses of high school students indicated that they were somewhat more enthusiastic about having the opportunity to attend school during the summer than were primary and middle school students. However, students at all three levels expressed a high degree of approval of the year-round program; and ESY administrators felt that the program was accepted and functioning smoothly at all five participating schools. The administrators were not able to cite a distinct advantage or disadvantage for year-round operation at any of the three organizational levels.

In March 1976 parents of third, sixth, and tenth grade students were given an opportunity to suggest how an extended school year might have been made to work in Knox County. The suggestions which were given are listed below in order by the frequency with which each was mentioned:

1) Assign students to segments of the year and make the attendance plan mandatory.
2) Adopt a different scheduling pattern such as the 45-15 plan.
3) Divide the summer between two attendance periods so that everyone would have part of the summer off.
4) Effectively promote the extended school year in the community through a public information and education program.
5) Use the summer session for enrichment, with courses in outdoor sports, art, crafts, music, foreign languages, etc.

Communicating the Results of Formative Evaluation

During the two-and-one-half-year period of the ESY project evaluation, the evaluation director prepared and submitted to the ESY administrative staff approximately 25 brief (between one and twenty pages) papers communicating interim evaluative findings. During the first 18 months, monthly, sometimes weekly, personal contacts with the project director were made by various evaluation team members. Every effort was made to establish the evaluation as a source of valuable information for fine-tuning project administrative procedures.

Initially the Curriculum Team and the specialist in administrative evaluation found that those teachers who had been involved in developing curriculum objectives and/or 45-day curriculum modules expressed much more positive attitudes toward the ESY project, and understood project objectives and procedures much more thoroughly, than did teachers who were not so involved. The evaluators suggested (1) that all ESY teachers be asked to submit written evaluative comments about the curriculum modules they had used, and (2) that the committees formed to revise the various modules be expanded to include

more teachers who had not been involved in the initial writing activities. These suggestions were incorporated in the module revision procedure, and the involvement of all teachers in the process constituted a valuable staff development exercise during the second year of the ESY project.

Other suggestions for curriculum module revision which were derived from evaluative data by the Curriculum Team and relayed immediately to ESY project administrators included:

(1) the modules needed to incorporate more suggestions for individualizing curriculum content to accommodate varying levels of student achievement.

(2) provisions for pre- and post-testing students to assess the extent to which they had accomplished module objectives needed to be strengthened.

(3) more attention needed to be given in the modules to interdisciplinary approaches to the teaching of individual subjects,

(4) the modules needed continuing revision and up-dating following initial revisions at the end of the first ESY year, and

(5) the procedure for revising modules, duplicating revised copies, and getting these copies to teachers needed to be accelerated so that teachers could study the revisions well in advance of the time for utilizing them in teaching.

The evaluation process revealed that some teachers had misinterpreted the administrative intent in providing the curriculum modules: administrators had viewed the modules as resource guides to be used, along with other materials, in planning individual approaches to the teaching of subject matter. During the initial months of the project, however, many ESY teachers saw the modules as series of daily lesson plans, as rather rigid prescriptions for what ought to occur in their classes. This view initially created some resentment among the teachers about outside interference in their classrooms, and later the teachers experienced frustration because the modules contained much more material than they felt they could "cover" in a 45-day period. When the ESY project administrators became aware of this misconception about the modules, curriculum supervisors began immediately to work with individual teachers to clarify the administration's intent.

Questionnaire responses and interviews with teachers conducted by the evaluator revealed some dissatisfaction among ESY teachers with their access to curriculum materials needed to implement the content of the modules. Some materials mentioned in the modules needed to be purchased by the school system, some needed to be made available in larger quantities, and those which were available in quantity needed to be delivered on a more reliable basis from the central office to the teachers who needed them. During the second year of the ESY project improvements were made in the supply of curriculum materials to teachers.

Evaluation of the professional development program for ESY faculty revealed that many teachers felt inadequate to the task of individualizing instruction in their classes. The principal reason for revising the curriculum as part of the ESY project was to promote individualization. Consequently, a major thrust in staff development programs in the five ESY schools during the second year of the project was consideration of methods of individualizing instruction.

Unfortunately, data for the analysis of costs associated with the ESY project did not become available in time for the cost analysis to be considered when the decision was made to terminate year-round operation of the ESY schools. If adequate funds had been available to support any innovative programming, the modest increase in direct costs per student contact hour of five percent the first year and seven percent the second year might have seemed to be justified in light of the positive factors associated with extending the school year. But the funds were not available in Knox County in 1975-76, so year-round scheduling became a victim of cost-cutting.

The evaluation involved a survey of voter opinion in the area of Knox County where the ESY project was carried out. Apparently the initial public information and education effort mounted to acquaint the community with the

ESY project had been effective; 70 percent of the respondents knew about the new program; 75 percent registered approval of several specific aspects of the program. However, more than half of the survey respondents wanted to know more about the extended school year and its attendant curriculum changes. And in another evaluation-related questionnaire, only 50 percent of the parents of students attending ESY schools indicated that they understood how the new curriculum was working in their children's schools. The evaluators recommended that an on-going public relations effort be established to keep parents, community organizations, and the general public informed about the year-round experiment. Staff assigned to the ESY project were overburdened just operating the new program, so additional personnel were needed to mount an effective public information campaign. Due either to a lack of funds for personnel, or to a feeling by the administration that public opinion was not a critical factor in the success of the ESY project, or to both factors, the public relations effort that was needed at the end of the first year of operation to stimulate interest in the second summer quinmester was not undertaken. Enrollment for the second summer session was down two percent, from thirteen percent, from enrollment for the first summer quinmester. Chiefly on the basis of that statistic, the school board voted to cut short the ESY experiment by eliminating the third summer quin.

The administration of an evaluation utilizing multiple data sources and teams of data gatherers is complex, and at times frustrating, because it involves meshing the widely varying points of view held by evaluation team members schooled in different disciplines. Nonetheless, evaluative conclusions and recommendations based on data from several sources are usually more credible than those supported by a single source. And an evaluation based on the work of specialists, each operating in his/her own area of expertise, may well

possess, as it does in the present case, greater authority in the minds of policy-makers than an evaluation based on the work of a single evaluator.

Evaluators' Conclusions Regarding the Extended School Year

The evaluation team provided evidence that the ESY project was well worth continuing, at least through its planned three-year trial. But less than twelve percent (about 650 of 5500) of the students at the participating schools elected to attend each of the two summer quins that were offered. Almost half of the students and parents questioned at all levels identified as the two key reasons for this lack of interest: "Summer is the time for vacation from school; it's hard to change that habit and think of coming to school in the summer," and "Students miss too many summer activities (camp, swimming, family trips, etc.) if they attend school during the summer." Knox County school board members did not feel the extra personnel and transportation costs associated with summer operation were justified, so in March 1976 they voted to eliminate the third summer, cutting the ESY trial short by a year.

Knox County's experiment with year-round education was soundly based on curriculum revision that made the summer program not merely an add-on for those who needed remediation or enrichment, but an integral part of the curriculum, which should have had broad-based student appeal. The program was sacrificed chiefly because the current economic and political climate does not allow local school boards to fund programs which may improve the education of a minority of students but which cost more than the traditional mode of operation. In short, while Title III funds could have made ESY available for three years, termination of those funds would have left the program in the category labeled "extra" -- ripe for chopping off in the next budget-cutting exercise. The limited interest shown in the first summer quinmester just accelerated a conclusion for the program which was probably inevitable.

The evaluators found indications that interest in the summer quin could have been increased if the public information and education program which preceded the first summer quin had been intensified, or at least continued at its initial level. The effort to educate the community was not made, however, and Knox County simply confirmed what many other systems have found out about year-round education: (1) without a massive campaign to change the more that summer is the time for vacation from school, the number of students voluntarily attending a summer session will be insufficient to permit significant enrollment reductions during other parts of the year; therefore, (2) extending the school year will not save a school system money unless a staggered attendance pattern is mandated which guarantees that some portion of the student body will be on vacation during every segment of the school year. With a mandatory plan a space savings of up to one-third (as with the 45-15 plan) can be achieved each year, and over several years the capital saved because new facilities were not constructed may offset the additional personnel and operating costs associated with keeping the schools in operation year-round.

While year-round operation has face validity as a practical measure for utilizing idle plant and personnel, it is not guaranteed to save a system money, and its appeal has been limited. In some urban settings the schools are operated year-round to provide a constructive alternative to a summer of idleness for inner-city youth, or to counteract presumed learning losses over the summer months. A mandatory year-round attendance plan can be useful to a suburban system experiencing a temporary enrollment increase (due, for instance, to a large construction project) because the additional students can be accommodated in existing classrooms as long as the need exists, then the traditional attendance pattern can be reestablished as enrollment diminishes again.

For the year-round education concept to gain a foothold in this era of dwindling enrollments and stringent limitations on school budget increases, it will have to be "sold" to the public as a practical and acceptable mode for operating any school (so that a mandatory attendance plan might be instituted without public outcry in a school experiencing enrollment growth), or at least demonstrated to benefit significantly, i.e., raise the achievement level, of a substantial minority or students (so that summer programs might be justified for those students seeking enrichment, remediation, or acceleration). Plans to extend the school year are not spreading rapidly throughout the country because to date neither of these conditions has been met.

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